

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XL. "WITH WEARY DAYS THOU  
SHALT BE CLOTHED AND FED."

CAPTAIN WINSTANLEY never again alluded to the dressmaker's bill. He was too wise a man to reopen old wounds, or to dwell upon small vexations. He had invested every penny that he could spare, leaving the smallest balance at his banker's compatible with respectability. He had to sell some railway shares in order to pay Madame Theodore. Happily the shares had gone up since his purchase of them, and he lost nothing by the transaction; but it galled him sorely to part with the money. It was as if an edifice that he had been toilfully raising, stone by stone, had begun to crumble under his hands. He knew not when or whence the next call might come. The time in which he had to save money was so short. Only six years, and the heiress would claim her estate, and Mrs. Winstanley would be left with the empty shell of her present position—the privilege of occupying a fine old Tudor mansion, with enormous stables, and fifteen acres of garden and shrubberies, and an annuity that would barely suffice to maintain existence in a third-rate London square.

Mrs. Winstanley was slow to recover from the shock of her husband's strong language about Theodore's bill. She was sensitive about all things that touched her own personality, and she was peculiarly sensitive about the difference between her husband's age and her own. She had married a man who was her junior; but she had married him with the conviction

that, in his eyes at least, she had all the bloom and beauty of youth, and that he admired and loved her above all other women. That chance allusion to her wrinkles had pierced her heart. She was deeply afflicted by the idea that her husband had perceived the signs of advancing years in her face. And now she fell to perusing her looking-glass more critically than she had ever done before. She saw herself in the searching north light; and the north light was more cruel and more candid than Captain Winstanley. There were lines on her forehead—unmistakable, ineffaceable lines. She could wear her hair in no way that would hide them, unless she had hidden her forehead altogether under a bush of frizzy fluffy curls. There was a faded look about her complexion, too, which she had never before discovered—a wanness, a yellowness. Yes; these things meant age! In such a spirit, perchance, did Elizabeth of England survey the reflection in her mirror, until all the glories of her reign seemed as nothing to her when weighed against this dread horror of fast-coming age. And luckless Mary, cooped up in the narrow rooms at Fotheringay, may have deemed captivity, and the shadow of doom, as but trifling ills compared with the loss of youth and beauty. Once to have been exquisitely beautiful, the inspiration of poets, the chosen model of painters, and to see the glory fading—that, for a weak woman, must be sorrow's crown of sorrow.

Anon dim feelings of jealousy began to gnaw Pamela's heart. She grew watchful of her husband's attentions to other women, suspicious of looks and words that meant no more than a man's desire to please. Society no longer made her

happy. Her Tuesday afternoons lost their charm. There was poison in everything. Lady Ellangowan's flirting ways, which had once only amused her, now tortured her. Captain Winstanley's devotion to this lively matron, which had heretofore seemed only the commoner's tribute of respect to the peeress, now struck his wife as a too obvious infatuation for the woman. She began to feel wretched in the society of certain women—nay, of all women who were younger, or possibly more attractive, than herself. She felt that the only security for her peace would be to live on a desert island, with the husband she had chosen. She was of too weak a mind to hide these growing doubts and ever-augmenting suspicions. The miserable truth oozed out of her in foolish little speeches; those continual droppings which wear the hardest stone, and which wore even the adamant surface of the captain's tranquil temper. There was a homeopathic admixture of this jealous poison in all the food he ate. He could rarely get through a tête-à-tête breakfast or dinner undisturbed by some invidious remark.

One day the captain rose up in his strength, and grappled with this jealous demon. He had let the little speeches, the random shots, pass unheeded until now; but on one particularly dismal morning, a bleak March morning, when the rain beat against the windows, and the deodaras and cypresses were lashed and tormented by the blustering wind, and the low sky was darkly grey, the captain's temper suddenly broke out.

"My dear Pamela, is it possible that these whimpering little speeches of yours mean jealousy?" he asked, looking at her severely from under bent brows.

"I'm sure I never said that I was jealous," faltered Pamela, stirring her tea with a nervous movement of her thin white hand.

"Of course not; no woman cares to describe herself in plain words as an idiot; but of late you have favoured me with a good many imbecile remarks, which all seem to tend one way. You are hurt and wounded when I am decently civil to the women I meet in society. Is that sensible or reasonable, in a woman of your age and experience?"

"You used not to taunt me with my age before we were married, Conrad."

"Do I taunt you with it now? I only say that a woman of forty"—Mrs. Winstanley

shuddered—"ought to have more sense than a girl of eighteen; and that a woman, who has had twenty years' experience of well-bred society, ought not to put on the silly jealousies of a school-girl trying to provoke a quarrel with her first lover."

"It is all very well to pretend to think me weak and foolish, Conrad. Yes, I know I am weak, ridiculously weak, in loving you as intensely as I do. But I cannot help that. It is my nature to cling to others, as the ivy clings to the oak. I would have clung to Violet, if she had been more loving and lovable. But you cannot deny that your conduct to Lady Ellangowan yesterday afternoon was calculated to make any wife unhappy."

"If a wife is to be unhappy because her husband talks to another woman about her horses and her gardens, I suppose I gave you sufficient cause for misery," answered the captain sneeringly. "I can declare that Lady Ellangowan and I were talking of nothing more sentimental."

"Oh, Conrad, it is not what you talked about, though your voice was so subdued that it was impossible for anyone to know what you were saying—"

"Except Lady Ellangowan."

"It was your manner. The way you bent over her, your earnest expression."

"Would you have had me stand three yards off, and bawl at the lady? Or am I bound to assume that bored and vacuous countenance which some young men consider good form? Come, my dear Pamela, pray let us be reasonable. Here are you and I settled for life beside the domestic hearth. We have no children. We are not particularly well-off—it will be as much as we shall be able to do, by-and-by, to make both ends meet. We are neither of us getting younger. These things are serious cares, and we have to bear them. Why should you add to these an imaginary trouble, a torment that has no existence, save in your own perverse mind? If you could but know my low estimate of the women to whom I am civil! I like society: and to get on in society a man must make himself agreeable to influential women. It is the women who have the reins in the social race, and by-and-by, if I should go into Parliament—"

"Parliament!" cried his wife. "You want to become a Member of Parliament, and to be out at all hours of the night! Our home-life would be altogether destroyed then."

"My dear Pamela, if you take such pains to make our home-life miserable, it

will be hardly worth preserving," retorted the captain.

"Conrad, I am going to ask you a question—a very solemn question."

"You alarm me."

"Long ago—before we were married—when Violet was arguing with me against our marriage—you know how vehemently she opposed it——"

"Perfectly. Go on."

"She told me that you had proposed to her before you proposed to me. Oh, Conrad, could that be true?"

The heartrending tone in which the question was asked, the pathetic look that accompanied it, convinced Captain Winstanley that, if he valued his domestic peace, he must perjure himself.

"It had no more foundation than many other assertions of that young lady's," he said. "I may have paid her compliments, and praised her beauty; but how could I think of her for a wife, when you were by? Your soft confiding nature conquered me, before I knew that I was hit."

He got up and went over to his wife and kissed her kindly enough, feeling sorry for her as he might have done for a wayward child that weeps it scarce knows wherefore, oppressed by a vague sense of affliction.

"Let us try to be happy together, Pamela," he pleaded with a sigh; "life is weary work at best."

"That means that you are not happy, Conrad."

"My love, I am as happy as you will let me be."

"Have I ever opposed you in anything?"

"No, dear; but lately you have indulged in covert upbraidings that have plagued me sorely. Let us have no more of them. As for your daughter"—his face darkened at the mention of that name—"understand at once, and for ever, that she and I can never inhabit the same house. If she comes, I go. If you cannot live without her, you must learn to live without me."

"Conrad, what have I done that you should talk of such a thing? Have I asked you to let Violet come home?"

"No; but you have behaved mopeishly of late, as if you were pining for her return."

"I pine for nothing but your love."

"That has always been yours."

With this assurance Mrs. Winstanley was fain to content herself, but even this assurance did not make her happy. The glory and brightness had departed from her life somehow; and neither kind words

nor friendly smiles from the captain could lure them back. There are stages in the lives of all of us when life seems hardly worth living: not periods of great calamity, but dull level bits of road along which the journey seems very weary. The sun has hidden himself behind grey clouds, cold winds are blowing up from the bitter east, the birds have left off singing, the landscape has lost its charm. We plod on drearily, and can see no Pole Star in life's darkening sky.

It had been thus of late with Pamela Winstanley. Slowly and gradually the conviction had come to her that her second marriage had been a foolish and ill-advised transaction, resulting inevitably in sorrow and unavailing remorse. The sweet delusion that it had been a love-match on Captain Winstanley's side, as well as on her own, abandoned her all at once, and she found herself face to face with stern common-sense.

That scene about Theodore's bill had exercised a curious effect upon her mind. To an intellect so narrow, trifles were important, and that the husband who had so much admired and praised the elegance of her appearance could grudge the cost of her toilet galled her sorely. It was positively for her the first revelation of her husband's character. His retrenchments in household expenses she had been ready to applaud as praiseworthy economies; but when he assailed her own extravagance, she saw in him a husband who loved far too wisely to love well.

"If he cared for me, if he valued my good looks, he could never object to my spending a few pounds upon a dress," she told herself.

She could not take the captain's common-sense view of a subject so important to herself. Love in her mind meant a blind indulgence like the squire's. Love that could count the cost of its idol's caprices, and calculate the chances of the future, was not love. That feeling of poverty, too, was a new sensation to the mistress of the Abbey House, and a very unpleasant one. Married very young to a man of ample means, who adored her, and never set the slightest restriction upon her expenditure, extravagance had become her second nature. To have to study every outlay, to ask herself whether she could not do without a thing, was a hard trial; but it had become so painful to her to ask the captain for money, that she preferred the novel pain of self-denial to that



humiliation. And then there was the cheerless prospect of the future always staring her in the face, that dreary time after Violet's majority, when it would be a question whether she and her husband could afford to go on living at the Abbey House.

"Everybody will know that my income is diminished," she thought. "However well we may manage, people will know that we are pinching."

This was a vexatious reflection. The sting of poverty itself could not be so sharp as the pain of being known to be poor.

Captain Winstanley pursued the even tenor of his way all this time, and troubled himself but little about his wife's petty sorrows. He did his duty to her according to his own lights, and considered that she had no ground for complaint. He even took pains to be less subdued in his manner to Lady Ellangowan, and to give no shadow of reason for the foolish jealousy he so much despised. His mind was busy about his own affairs. He had saved money since his marriage, and he employed himself a good deal in the investment of his savings. So far he had been lucky in all he touched, and had contrived to increase his capital by one or two speculative ventures in foreign railways. If things went on as well for the next six years, he and his wife might live at the Abbey House, and maintain their station in the county, till the end of the chapter.

"I daresay Pamela will outlive me," thought the captain; "those fragile-looking invalid women are generally long lived. And I have all the chances of the hunting-field, and vicious horses, and other men's blundering with loaded guns, against me. What can happen to a woman who sits at home, and works crewel antimacassars, and reads novels all day, and never drinks anything stronger than tea, and never eats enough to disturb her digestion?"

Secure in this idea of his wife's longevity, and happy in his speculations, Captain Winstanley looked forward cheerfully to the future: and the evil shadow of the day when the hand of fate should thrust him from the good old house had never fallen across his dreams.

#### CHAPTER XLII. LOVE AND ESTHETICS.

SPRING had returned, primroses and violets were being sold at the street-corners, Parliament was assembled, and London had reawakened to life and vigour. The Dovedales were at their Kensington mansion. The duchess had sent forth her

cards for alternate Thursday evenings of a quasi-literary and scientific character. Lady Mabel was polishing her poems with serious thoughts of publication, but with strictest secrecy. No one but her parents and Roderick Vawdrey had been told of these poetic flights. The book would be given to the world under a *nom de plume*. Lady Mabel was not so much a Philistine as to suppose that writing good poetry could be a disgrace to a duke's daughter; but she felt that the house of Ashbourne would be seriously compromised were the critics to find her guilty of writing doggerel; and critics are apt to deal harshly with the titled muse.

Mr. Vawdrey was in town. He rode a good deal in the Row, spent an hour or so daily at Tattersall's, haunted three or four clubs of a juvenile and frivolous character, and found the task of killing time rather hard labour. Of course there were certain hours in which he was on duty at Kensington. He was expected to eat his luncheon there daily, to dine when neither he nor the ducal house had any other engagement, and to attend all his aunt's parties. There was always a place reserved for him at the dinner-table, however middle-aged and politically or socially important the assembly might be.

He was to be married early in August. Everything was arranged. The honeymoon was to be spent in Sweden and Norway—the only accessible part of Europe which Lady Mabel had not explored. They were to see everything remarkable in the two countries, and to do Denmark as well, if they had time. Lady Mabel was learning Swedish and Norwegian, in order to make the most of her opportunities.

"It is so wretched to be dependent upon couriers and interpreters," she said. "I shall be a more useful companion for you, Roderick, if I thoroughly know the language of each country."

"My dear Mabel, you are a most remarkable girl," exclaimed her betrothed admiringly. "If you go on at this rate, by the time you are forty you will be as great a linguist as Cardinal Wiseman."

"Languages are very easy to learn when one has the habit of studying them, and a slight inclination for etymology," Lady Mabel replied modestly.

Now that the hour of publication was really drawing nigh, the poetess began to feel the need of a confidante. The duchess was admiring, but somewhat obtuse, and



rarely admired in the right place. The duke was out of the question.

If a new Shakespeare had favoured him with the first reading of a tragedy as great as Hamlet, the duke's thoughts would have wandered off to the impending dearth of guano, or the probable exhaustion of Suffolk punches, and the famous breed of Chillingham oxen. So, for want of any one better, Lady Mabel was constrained to read her verses to her future husband; just as Molière read his plays to his housekeeper, for want of any other hearer.

Now, in this crucial hour of her poetic career, Mabel Ashbourne wanted something more than a patient listener. She wanted a critic with a fine ear for rhythm and euphony. She wanted a judge who could nicely weigh the music of a certain combination of syllables, and who could decide for her when she hesitated between two epithets of equal force, but varying depths of tone.

To this nice task she invited her betrothed sometimes on a sunny April afternoon, when luncheon was over, and the lovers were free to repair to Lady Mabel's own particular den—an airy room on an upper floor, with quaint old Queen Anne casements opening upon a balcony crammed with flowers, and overlooking the umbrageous avenues of Kensington Gardens, with a glimpse of the old red palace in the distance.

Rorie did his best to be useful, and applied himself to his duty with perfect heartiness and good-temper; but luncheon, and the depressing London atmosphere, made him sleepy, and he had sometimes hard work to stifle his yawns, and to keep his eyes open, while Lady Mabel was deep in the entanglement of lines which soared to the seventh heaven of metaphysics. Unhappily Rorie knew hardly anything about metaphysics; and a feeling of despair took possession of him when his sweetheart's poetry degenerated into diluted Hegelism, or rose to a feeble imitation of Browning's obscurest verse.

"Either I must be intensely stupid or this must be rather difficult to understand," he thought helplessly, when Mabel had favoured him with the perusal of the first act of a tragedy or poetic duologue, in which the hero, a kind of milk-and-watery Faustus, held converse, and argued upon the deeper questions of life and faith, with a very mild Mephisto.

"I'm afraid you don't like the opening of my Tragedy of the Sceptic Soul," Lady

Mabel said with a somewhat offended air, as she looked up at the close of the act, and saw poor Rorie gazing at her with watery eyes, and an intensely despondent expression of countenance.

"I'm afraid I'm rather dense this afternoon," he said with hasty apology. "I think your first act is beautifully written—the lines are full of music; nobody with an ear for euphony could doubt that; but I—forgive me, I fancy you are sometimes a shade too metaphysical—and those scientific terms which you occasionally employ, I fear will be a little over the heads of the general public—"

"My dear Roderick, do you suppose that in an age whose highest characteristic is the rapid advance of scientific knowledge, there can be anybody so benighted as not to understand the terminology of science?"

"Perhaps not, dear. I fear I am very much behind the times. I have lived too much in Hampshire. I frankly confess that some expressions in your—er—Tragedy—of—er—Soulless Scept—Sceptic Soul—were Greek to me."

"Poor dear Roderick, I should hardly take you as the highest example of the Zeitgeist; but I won't allow you to call yourself stupid. I'm glad you like the swing of the verse. Did it remind you of any contemporary poet?"

"Well, yes; I think it dimly suggested Browning."

"I am glad of that. I would not for worlds be an imitator; but Browning is my idol among poets."

"Some of his minor pieces are awfully jolly," said the incorrigible Rorie. "That little poem called Youth and Art, for instance. And James Lee's Wife is rather nice, if one could quite get at what it means. But I suppose that is too much to expect from any great poet?"

"There are deeper meanings beneath the surface—meanings which require study," replied Mabel condescendingly. "Those are the religion of poetry—"

"No doubt," assented Rorie hastily; "but frankly, my dear Mabel, if you want your book to be popular—"

"I don't want my book to be popular. Browning is not popular. If I had wanted to be popular, I should have worked on a lower level. I would even have stooped to write a novel."

"Well, then, I will say if you want your poem to be understood by the average intellect, I really would sink the scientific

terminology, and throw overboard a good deal of the metaphysics. Byron has not a scientific or technical phrase in all his poems."

"My dear Roderick, you surely would not compare me to Byron, the poet of the Philistines. You might as well compare me with the author of *Lalla Rookh*, or advise me to write like Rogers or Campbell."

"I beg your pardon, my dear Mabel. I'm afraid I must be an out and out Philistine, for to my mind Byron is the prince of poets. I would rather have written *The Giaour* than anything that has ever been published since it appeared."

Mabel Ashbourne closed her manuscript volume with a sigh, and registered an oath that she would never read any more of her poetry to Roderick Vawdrey. It was quite useless. The poor young man meant well, but he was incorrigibly stupid.

"In the realm of thought we must dwell apart all our lives," Mabel told herself despairingly.

"The horses are ordered for five," she said, as she locked the precious volume in her desk; "will you get yours, and come back for me?"

"I shall be delighted," answered her lover, relieved at being let off so easily.

It was about this time that Lord Mallow, who was working with all his might for the regeneration of his country, made a great hit in the House by his speech on the Irish land question. He had been doing wonderful things in Dublin during the winter, holding forth to patriotic assemblies in the Round Room of the Rotunda, boldly declaring himself a champion of the Home Rulers' cause, demanding Repeal and nothing but Repeal. He was one of the few Repealers who had a stake in the country, and who was likely to lose by the disruption of social order. If foolish, he was at least disinterested, and had the courage of his opinions.

In the House of Commons Lord Mallow was not ashamed to repeat the arguments he had used in the Round Room. If his language was less vehement at Westminster than it had been in Dublin, his opinions were no less thorough. He had his party here, as well as on the other side of the Irish Channel; and his party applauded him. Here was a statesman and a landowner willing to give an ell, where Mr. Gladstone's Land Act gave only an inch. Hibernian newspapers sang his praises in glowing words, comparing him

to Burke, Curran, and O'Connell. He had for some time been a small lion at evening parties; he now began to be lionised at serious dinners. The Duchess of Dovedale considered it a nice trait in his character that, although he was so much in request, and worked so hard in the House, he never missed one of her Thursday evenings. Even when there was an important debate on he would tear up Birdcage Walk in a hansom, and spend an hour in the duchess's amber drawing-rooms, enlightening Lady Mabel as to the latest aspect of the Policy of Conciliation, or standing by the piano while she played Chopin.

Lord Mallow had never forgotten his delight at finding a young lady thoroughly acquainted with the history of his native land, thoroughly interested in Erin's struggles and Erin's hopes; a young lady who knew all about the Protestants of Ulster, and what was meant by Fixity of Tenure. He came to Lady Mabel for sympathy in his triumphs, and he came to her in his disappointments. She was pleased and flattered by his faith in her wisdom, and was always ready to lend a gracious ear. She, whose soul was full of ambition, was deeply interested in the career of an ambitious young man—a man who had every excuse for being shallow and idle, and yet was neither.

"If Roderick were only like him there would be nothing wanting in my life," she thought regretfully. "I should have felt such pride in a husband's fame; I should have worked so gladly to assist him in his career. The driest blue-books would not have been too weary for me—the dullest drudgery of parliamentary detail would have been pleasant work, if it could have helped him in his progress to political distinctions."

One evening, when Mabel and Lord Mallow were standing in the embrasure of a window, walled in by the crowd of aristocratic nobodies and intellectual eccentricities, talking earnestly of poor Erin and her chances of ultimate happiness, the lady, almost unawares, quoted a couplet of her own which seemed peculiarly applicable to the argument.

"Whose lines are those?" Lord Mallow asked eagerly; "I never heard them before."

Mabel blushed like a schoolgirl detected in sending a valentine.

"Upon my soul," cried the Irishman, "I believe they are your own! Yes, I am

sure of it. You, whose mind is so high above the common level, must sometimes express yourself in poetry. They are yours, are they not?"

"Can you keep a secret?" Lady Mabel asked shyly.

"For you? Yes, on the rack. Wild horses should not tear it out of my heart; boiling lead, falling on me drop by drop, should not extort it from me."

"The lines are mine. I have written a good deal—in verse. I am going to publish a volume, anonymously, before the season is over. It is quite a secret. No one—except mamma and papa, and Mr. Vawdrey—knows anything about it."

"How proud they—how especially proud Mr. Vawdrey must be of your genius," said Lord Mallow. "What a lucky fellow he is!"

He was thinking at that moment of Violet Tempest, to whose secret preference for Roderick Vawdrey he attributed his own rejection. And now here—where again he might have found the fair ideal of his youthful dreams—here where he might have hoped to form an alliance at once socially and politically advantageous—this young Hampshire squire was before him.

"I don't think Mr. Vawdrey is particularly interested in my poetical efforts," Lady Mabel said with assumed carelessness. "He doesn't care for poetry. He likes Byron."

"What an admirable epigram!" cried the Hibernian, to whom flattery was second nature. "I shall put that down in my commonplace book when I go home. How I wish you would honour me—but it is to ask too much, perhaps—how proud I should be if you would let me hear, or see, some of your poems."

"Would you really like——" faltered Lady Mabel.

"Like! I should deem it the highest privilege your friendship could vouchsafe."

"If I felt sure it would not bore you, I should like much to have your opinion, your candid opinion" (Lord Mallow tried to look the essence of candour) "upon some things I have written. But it would be really to impose too much upon your good-nature."

"It would be to make me the proudest, and—for that one brief hour at least—the happiest of men," protested Lord Mallow, looking intensely sentimental.

"And you will deal frankly with me?"

You will not flatter? You will be as severe as an Edinburgh reviewer?"

"I will be positively brutal," said Lord Mallow. "I will try to imagine myself an elderly feminine contributor to the Saturday, looking at you with vinegar gaze through a pair of spectacles, bent upon spotting every fleck and flaw in your work, and predetermined not to see anything good in it."

"Then I will trust you!" cried Lady Mabel, with a gush. "I have longed for a listener who could understand and criticise, and who would be too honourable to flatter. I will trust you, as Marguerite of Valois trusted Clement Marot."

Lord Mallow did not know anything about the French poet and his royal mistress, but he contrived to look as if he did. And, before he ran away to the House presently, he gave Lady Mabel's hand a tender little pressure, which she accepted in all good faith as a sign manual of the compact between them.

They met in the Row next morning, and Lord Mallow asked—as earnestly as if the answer involved vital issues—when he might be permitted to hear those interesting poems.

"Whenever you can spare time to listen," answered Lady Mabel, more flattered by his earnestness than by all the adulatory sugar-plums which had been showered upon her since her debut. "If you have nothing better to do this afternoon——"

"Could I have anything better to do?"

"We won't enter upon so wide a question," said Lady Mabel, laughing prettily. "If committee-rooms and public affairs can spare you for an hour or two, come to tea with mamma at five. I'll get her to deny herself to all the rest of the world, and we can have an undisturbed hour in which you can deal severely with my poor little efforts."

Thus it happened that, in the sweet spring weather, while Roderick was on the stand at Epsom, watching the City and Suburban winner pursue his meteor course along the close-cropped sward, Lord Mallow was sitting at ease in a flowery fauteuil in the Queen Anne morning-room at Kensington, sipping orange-scented tea out of eggshell porcelain, and listening to Lady Mabel's dulcet accents, as she somewhat monotonously and inexpressively rehearsed *The Tragedy of a Sceptic Soul*.

The poem was long, and, sooth to say,



passing dreary; and, much as he admired the duke's daughter, there were moments when Lord Mallow felt his eyelids drooping, and heard a buzzing, as of summer insects, in his ears.

There was no point of interest in all this rhythmical meandering whereon the hapless young nobleman could fix his attention. Another minute and his sceptic soul would be wandering at ease in the flowery fields of sleep. He pulled himself together with an effort, just as the eggshell cup and saucer were slipping from his relaxing grasp. He asked the duchess for another cup of that delicious tea. He gazed resolutely at the fair-faced maiden, whose rosy lips moved graciously, discoursing shallowest platitudes clothed in erudite polysyllables, and then at the first pause—when Lady Mabel laid down her velvet-bound volume, and looked timidly upward for his opinion—Lord Mallow poured forth a torrent of eloquence, such as he always had in stock, and praised *The Sceptic Soul* as no poem and no poet had ever been praised before, save by Hibernian critic.

He was so grateful to Providence for having escaped falling asleep that he could have gone on for ever. But if anyone had asked Lord Mallow what *The Tragedy of the Sceptic Soul* was about, Lord Mallow would have been spun.

When a strong-minded woman is weak upon one particular point she is apt to be very weak. Lady Mabel's weakness was to fancy herself a second Browning. She had never yet enjoyed the bliss of having her own idea of herself confirmed by independent evidence. Her soul thrilled as Lord Mallow poured forth his praises; talking of *The Book and the Ring*, and *Paracelsus*, and a great deal more, of which he knew very little, and seeing in the expression of Lady Mabel's eyes and mouth that he was saying the right thing, and could hardly say too much.

They were tête-à-tête by this time, for the duchess was sleeping frankly, her crewel-work drooping from the hands that lay idle in her lap; her second cup of tea on the table beside her, half-finished.

"I don't know how it is," she was wont to say apologetically, after these placid slumbers. "There is something in Mabel's voice that always sends me to sleep. Her tones are so musical."

"And do you really advise me to publish?" asked Lady Mabel, fluttered and happy.

"It would be a sin to keep such verses hidden from the world."

"They will be published anonymously, of course. I could not endure to be pointed at as the author of *The Sceptic Soul*. To feel that every eye was upon me—at the opera—in the Row—everywhere! It would be too dreadful. I should be proud to know that I had influenced my age—given a new bent to thought—but no one must be able to point at me."

"Thou canst not say I did it," quoted Lord Mallow. "I entirely appreciate your feelings. Publicity of that sort must be revolting to a delicate mind. I should think Byron would have enjoyed life a great deal better if he had never been known as the author of *Childe Harold*. He reduced himself to a social play-actor—and always had to pose in his particular rôle—the Noble Poet. If Bacon really wrote the plays we call Shakespeare's, and kept the secret all his life, he was indeed the wisest of mankind."

"You have done nothing but praise me," said Lady Mabel, after a thoughtful pause, during which she had trifled with the golden clasp of her volume; "I want you to do something more than that. I want you to advise—to tell me where I am redundant—to point out where I am weak. I want you to help me in the labour of polishing."

Lord Mallow pulled his whisker doubtfully. This was dreadful. He should have to go into particulars presently, to say what lines pleased him best, which of the various metres into which the tragedy was broken up—like a new suburb into squares and crescents and streets—seemed to him happiest and most original.

"Can you trust me with that precious volume?" he asked. "If you can, I will spend the quiet hours of the night in pondering over its pages, and will give you the result of my meditations to-morrow."

Mabel put the book into his hand with a grateful smile.

"Pray be frank with me," she pleaded. "Praise like yours is perilous."

Lord Mallow kissed her hand this time, instead of merely pressing it, and went away radiant, with the velvet-bound book under his arm.

"She's a sweet girl," he said to himself, as he hailed a cab. "I wish she wasn't engaged to that Hampshire booby, and I wish she didn't write poetry. Hard

that I should have to do the Hampshire booby's work! If I were to leave this book in a hansom now—there'd be an awful situation!"

Happily for the rising statesman, he was blest with a clever young secretary, who wrote a good many letters for him, read blue-books, got up statistics, and interviewed obtrusive visitors from the Green Isle. To this young student, Lord Mallow, in strictest secrecy, confided Lady Mabel's manuscript.

"Read it carefully, Allan, while I'm at the House, and make a note of everything that's bad on one sheet of paper, and of everything that's good on another. You may just run your pencil along the margin wherever you think I might write 'divine!' 'grandly original!' 'what pathos!' or anything of that sort."

The secretary was a conscientious young man, and did his work nobly. He sat far into the small hours, ploughing through *The Sceptic Soul*. It was tough work; but Mr. Allan was Scotch and dogged, and prided himself upon his critical faculty. This autopsy of a fine lady's poem was a congenial labour. He scribbled pages of criticism, went into the minutest details of style, found a great deal to blame and not much to praise, and gave his employer a complete digest of the poem before breakfast next morning.

Lord Mallow attended the duchess's kettledrum again that afternoon, and this time he was in no wise at sea. He handled *The Sceptic Soul* as if every line of it had been engraven on the tablet of his mind.

"See here now," he cried, turning to a pencilled margin; "I call this a remarkable passage, yet I think it might be strengthened by some trifling excisions;" and then he showed Lady Mabel how, by pruning twenty lines off a passage of thirty-one, a much finer effect might be attained.

"And you really think my thought stands out more clearly?" asked Mabel, looking regretfully at the lines through which Lord Mallow had run his pencil—some of her finest lines.

"I am sure of it. That grand idea of yours was like a star in a hazy sky. We have cleared away the fog."

Lady Mabel sighed. "To me the meaning of the whole passage seemed so obvious," she said.

"Because it was your own thought. A mother knows her own children however they are dressed."

This second tea-drinking was a very serious affair. Lord Mallow went at the poem like a professional reviewer, and criticised without mercy, yet contrived not to wound the author's vanity.

"It is because you have real genius that I venture to be brutally candid," he said, when, by those slap-dash pencil-marks of his—always with the author's consent—he had reduced the *Tragedy of the Sceptic Soul* to about one-third of its original length. "I was carried away yesterday by my first impressions; to-day I am coldly critical. I have set my heart upon your poem making a great success."

This last sentence, freely translated, might be taken to mean: "I should not like such an elegant young woman to make an utter fool of herself."

Mr. Vawdrey came in while critic and poet were at work, and was told what they were doing. He evinced no unworthy jealousy, but seemed glad that Lord Mallow should be so useful.

"It's a very fine poem," he said, "but there's too much metaphysics in it. I told Mabel so the other day. She must alter a good deal of it if she wants to be understood of the people."

"My dear Roderick, my poem is metaphysical or it is nothing," Mabel answered pettishly.

She could bear criticism from Lord Mallow better than criticism from Roderick. After this it became an established custom for Lord Mallow to drop in every day, to inspect the progress of Lady Mabel's poems in the course of their preparation for the press. The business part of the matter had been delegated to him, as much more *au fait* in such things than homely rustic Rorie. He chose the publisher, and arranged the size of the volume, type, binding, initials, tail-pieces, every detail. The paper was to be thick and creamy, the type mediæval, the borders were to be printed in carmine, the initials and tail-pieces specially drawn and engraved, and as quaint as the wood-cuts in an old edition of *Le Lutrin*. The book was to have red edges, and a smooth grey linen binding with silver lettering. It was to be altogether a gem of typographic art.

By the end of May Lady Mabel's poems were all in type, and there was much discussion about commas and notes of admiration, syllables too much or too little, in the flowery morning-room at Kensington, what time Roderick Vawdrey—sorely at a loss for occupation—wasted the summer

hours at races or other outdoor amusements within easy reach of London, or went to out-of-the-way places to look at hunters of wonderful repute, which, on inspection, were generally disappointing.

## TWENTY YEARS' CAPTIVITY IN CEYLON.

Two hundred and twenty-two years ago the East India Company had been founded more than fifty years; our first factory, at Surat, was forty-five years old; Sir Thomas Roe had gone as James the First's ambassador to the Great Mogul; yet we were looked on as (what we were) a set of peddling traders, willing to submit to almost any humiliation for the sake of making money.

Nowadays, if a white man in India goes on the loose—an engineer or railway-stoker or so forth—he may, with care, live for months upon the natives, doing just as he likes, and getting the best of everything. The thing has been tried again and again. All that an impudent rascal has to do is to keep out of the way of Europeans and educated Hindoos, and to show a paper purporting that he is sent round by Government to take some census or other, and everybody will be ready to fee him and make him presents, hoping thereby to get his good word with the authorities. How differently the white man then fared amongst Orientals, Robert Knox's veracious narrative will show:

"Anno 1657, the *Ann Frigate*, of London, Captain R. Knox, commander, on the one-and-twentieth day of January, set sail out of the Downs, in the service of the Hon. East India Company, bound for Fort St. George, on the coast of Coromandel, to trade one year from port to port in India." But as they were lading for England, "happened such a mighty storm that we were forced to cut our main-mast by the board," and were sent by the agent at Fort St. George to Cotair Bay in Ceylon, there to sell some cloth while damages were being repaired.

Ceylon was quite new ground to the English, and "at our first coming we were shy and jealous of the people of the place;" but after twenty days' coming and going they gained confidence, and the captain and his son and eighteen men, venturing ashore, were captured. The Cingalese treated them very well, quartering the officers "in a house all hanged with white calico, which is the greatest

honour they can show to any;" and assured them that they were only detained till the king had got ready his present and letters to the English nation. "Therefore," urged the native officials, "do you take order for bringing the ship up into the river, lest the Dutch fire her if she remains in the bay." Naturally, instead of doing this, the captain sends and exhorts those left on board to shot their guns, put top chains on their cables, and keep a watch. The Cingalese, thinking he has been doing what they wish, bid him send a more urgent message by his son, he being security for his return; so the writer of the narrative is despatched on board, and tells the rest of the crew how things are going, and gets them to sign a letter, "which should clear his father and himself," to the effect that they will not obey the captain, but will stand on their own defence. By-and-by the ship sails away, and pretty soon those left behind are marched inland, and "separated and placed asunder, one in a village, where we could have none to confer withal or look upon but the horrible black faces of our heathen enemies. Yet was God so merciful to us as not to suffer them to part my father and I."

On their journey they had been very kindly treated; men being appointed to carry their little baggage, and plenty of all kinds of food being brought them ready cooked. The people had to pay for all this, "for we fed like soldiers upon free quarters; yet I think we gave them good content for all the charge we put them to, which was to have the satisfaction of seeing us eat to the public view of all beholders, who greatly admired us, having never seen Englishmen before. It was also great entertainment to them to observe our manner of eating with spoons, which some of us had, and that we could not take the rice up in our hands and put it to our mouths without spilling, as they do, nor gaped and poured water into our mouths out of pots according to their country's custom."

Father and son were presently settled in the same house, not far from Candy; the father choosing an open house, having only a roof, "their houses being dark and dirty. Herein the natives placed a cot or bedstead for him, which in their account is an extraordinary lodging, and for me a mat upon the ground."

The season was unhealthy; many of the people dying of fever and ague, "insomuch that many times we were forced to remain



an hungry, there being none well enough to boil or bring victuals unto us." For a time their health kept good, and life was pretty bearable with them: "We had with us a Practice of Piety, and Mr. Rogers's seven treatises called the Practice of Christianity, with which companions we did frequently discourse, and in the cool of the evening walk abroad in the fields for a refreshing, tired with being all day in our house or prison." But soon the father fell sick, and was full of remorse at having brought his son ashore again. And so for weary months Captain Knox "lay groaning and sighing in a most piteous manner, insomuch that I was almost reduced to the same condition, but then I felt that doctrine of Mr. Rogers most true—that God is most sweet when the world is most bitter."

Then the father died, having first arranged "the order concerning his burial—that having no winding-sheet, I should pull his shirt over his head and slip his breeches over his feet, and so wrap him up in the mat he laid upon."

The son was so sick that he could scarcely move; but he hired some one to help dig a grave, and then, with the aid of their black serving lad, the body was decently laid below ground, "and I remained where I was before, with none but my black boy and my ague to bear me company."

By-and-by, to his great joy, in exchange for a cap which the black boy had knitted, he got an English Bible. "While I was fishing an old man asked if I could read: for, said he, I have a book which I got when the Portuguese lost Colombo." We can imagine his feelings when he found what book it was; he was ready to pay even his one gold pagoda for it if needful, but his boy told him the old man would only want a trifle. The moment he got it he fell to pricking for verses, after the fashion of the time; and "the first place the book opened in was the sixteenth chapter of Acts, and the verse that my eye first pitched on was: 'What must I do to be saved?'"

His countrymen began to act as uneducated Englishmen too often do among natives. "At first they daily expected to be put to work, but finding the king's order was to feed them well only, they began to domineer, and would not be content unless they had such victuals as pleased them, and oftentimes used to throw the pots, victuals and all, at their heads that brought them, which they

patiently would bear." Food was granted them, but not clothes; so instead of taking their allowance ready dressed, "they devised to take it raw, and so to pinch somewhat out of their bellies to save for their backs." Cap-knitting, too, brought in some money, "but at length, we plying hard our new-learned trade, caps began to abound, which reduced several of our nation to great want."

Quiet as he was himself, young Knox could not help relishing the instances which he gives of "English metal;" how one of these men, because a potter would not sell to him at his own price, quarrelled with him, and getting the worst of it, complained to the magistrate "as being one that belonged unto the king." The poor potter was bound by soldiers, and while he was in that state the Englishman was sent in to beat him, and was told to take the pots for nothing, "and the soldiers laid in many blows besides." A wine merchant fared no better; because he would not supply drink for nothing to a party of English he and his friends got their heads broken, and when they ran off streaming with blood to their great men, they were only laughed at into the bargain. "Our men got two or three black and blue blows, but they came home with their bellies full of drink for their pains."

Knox, too, had a quaint way of taking care of himself. His house was too small to cook as well as live in, so he got the people to build him a bigger one in a convenient garden belonging to the king. He and his boy whitened the walls, a capital crime among the Cingalese, "for none may white their houses with lime, that being peculiar to royal houses and temples. But being a stranger nothing was made of it." Here he lived in great comfort, keeping hogs and hens, and learning to knit caps, and being allowed all the cocoanuts that fell down before gathering-time.

There was another set of fourteen Englishmen in the island, part of the crew of the ship Persian Merchant, cast away on the Maldives. These also the king kept in the same way, apparently dreading lest if they were permitted to go home they should tell of the nakedness of the land, and induce their countrymen to do as the Portuguese and Dutch had already done. These showed more "metal and manfulness" than even Knox's companions, killing cows because they did not like their short commons of flesh, and turning the king's officers out of a garden of

jack-trees, from which the royal elephants were fed; "yet these gentlemen were so civil that, notwithstanding this affront, they laid no punishment upon them, but a few days after they were removed to another house where was a garden but no jack-trees in it, and because they would not allow the king a few they lost all themselves."

Two lads of this company were taken into the king's service, and fared as every courtier fared sooner or later under such a tyrant. One of them privately got speech of the Dutch ambassador, and was caught. Had he been a courtier he would surely have been put to death; being a foreigner he was only banished to the mountains, where he took a wife and "lived better content than in the palace." The other broke a china dish, took sanctuary, and was forgiven. But by-and-by he committed the unpardonable sin of having to do with written letters, of which the king was as jealous as if he had thought a letter was able to blow up his government. A Portuguese wrote to him to try to get him begged off some unpleasant duty, and he showed the letter to a native courtier. After a time the courtier told the king; whereupon, "the Portuguese, the Englishman, and he that read the letter, because he had informed no sooner, were torn to pieces by the elephants."

So things went on till the year 1664, when the right worshipful Sir Edward Winter, governor and agent of Fort St. George, wrote to the king on behalf of the captives, and the Dutch ambassador also made an effort for them. Rajah-singah gave them their choice whether they would go away in their own boat (grown crazy through age) or with the Dutch ambassador. They chose the latter course, but just then the king's intolerable cruelty forced his people into a rebellion. While this was going on their allowance was stopped, and they were reduced to such straits that they were glad to join in the scrambles for money and clothes which were made by the rebel princes. In this way they got enough to provide their Christmas dinner, which they proceeded to eat together, "intending neither to make nor meddle on the one side or on the other."

The rebellion failed miserably; the boy-prince, who was to have been made king in Rajah-singah's room, fled with his aunt to the very father whom he was to have supplanted. This amazed and discouraged

the rebels, as much as taking away their queen does a swarm of bees.

After the rebellion was stamped out (by the royal elephants), nothing more was heard of travelling with the Dutch ambassador, and all Knox's comrades save three, despairing of liberty, took wives and settled down among the natives; but Knox himself never for an hour gave up the hope of some day or other escaping. This the king determined, if possible, to prevent; for when a Dutch invasion came rather near the English settlement, he had them all hurried off to the mountains, poor Knox losing all his stock in trade, "lying scattered abroad in betel-nuts, so that I called to mind Job's words: 'Naked came I into the world, and naked shall I return.'" The poor mountaineers had a benefit; the king laid on them the maintenance of all these idle prisoners; "and if their ability would not reach therunto, it was the king's order to bid them sell their cattle and goods, and when that was done, their wives and children, rather than we should want of our due allowance."

What with hogs, and hens, and betel-nuts, and knitted caps, Knox managed to make money, and actually bought for five dollars a plot of ground, taking care to ascertain of the district governor that it was land which might be bought and sold, and "not in the least litigious." "The place liked me wondrous well, it being a point of land standing into a cornfield, so that cornfields were on three sides of it, and very well watered. In the ground eight cocoanut-trees and all sorts of fruit trees; but it had been so long desolate that it was all overgrown with bushes." Unfortunately he does not say how much ground it was, but goes on to tell us how the contract was "written upon a leaf, after that country manner, and witnessed by seven or eight men of the best quality in the town." Here he and three of his companions built a house, "and with a joint consent concluded that only single men and bachelors should dwell there, and such as would not be conformable to this agreement to forfeit all right and claim to the benefit." In two years' time two out of the four, finding the low country beset with watchers, and weary of peddling and cap-selling about the northern mountains, took wives; so that Knox was left with only Stephen Rutland, "whose inclination and resolution was as steadfast as mine against marriage."

The native wives were helpful, spinning

cotton yarn and knitting the always saleable caps, while the men, among other trades, took to "stilling rack," for which Rajah-singah never thought of making them take out a license. In fact, they thrived remarkably well, "and this I speak to the praise and glory of our God, who loves the stranger in giving him food and raiment, and hath been pleased to give us favour and a good repute in the sight of our enemies. Nor can we complain for want of justice, or that our cause hath been discountenanced, but rather we have been favoured above the natives themselves."

At last the king thought that these idle foreigners might be made useful; and beginning with some Dutch runaways, who would be sure not to desert again for fear of the gallows, he formed a small force of married men. The English were too few to form a separate company, and the Portuguese would not serve under a Dutchman, so all were divided into two corps; but the few English pretty soon took to paying some poor runaway Dutch to serve in their stead, finding that the king's soldiers never got either pay or allowance. On the other hand, "he winks at their failings more than he uses to do towards his natural subjects; for upon the watch they use to be very negligent, one lying drunk here and another there. They have to guard one of the magazines, and the king has contrived their station a pretty good distance from the Court, that they might swear and swagger out of his hearing." One great privilege was that they might wear what clothes they pleased—"gold, silver, or silk, and shoes and stockings, and a shoulder-belt and sword, and their houses whitened with lime—all which the Chingulays are not permitted to do."

Knox was puzzled why Rajah-singah is at such pains and cost to keep so many white men in captivity. "It cannot be out of hope of profit or advantage; neither is it in the power of money to redeem any, for that he neither values nor needs." He concluded that he kept them "out of love and favour, delighting in their company, and to have them ready at command." His subjects winced under the burden, "being more like slaves unto us than we unto the king, and their poverty oftentimes so great that, for want of what they are forced to supply us with themselves, their wives and children must suffer hunger. Such," he adds, in the true Puritan vein, "is the favour that Almighty God hath

given Christian people in the sight of this heathen king, whose entertainment and usage of them is thus favourable."

Meanwhile the joint household thrived admirably. Goats were added to the hens and hogs; and, with a great thorn gate, like the gate of the city, the place was made as grand as any nobleman's seat in the land; the object of all this neatness being to prevent the people from thinking they had any intent to escape.

Knox next took to lending out corn, "the benefit of which is fifty per cent. per annum." But as there were always a number of creditors, and those who came first seized what was due to them, he was put to the trouble of watching early and late till his debtors' crops were ripe, "and many times missed of them after all his pains." Those who had to wait till the next year were paid, if they could get it, cent. per cent.; "but the interest never runs up higher, though the debt be seven years unpaid."

Once Knox was summoned to Court, a promotion which he looked on as something like a sentence of death; but he begged off, and stayed away when sent for; and at last, as seems to have been usual, the king got tired of sending for him.

And now he and his comrade began to plan their long-meditated escape. The only feasible way seemed by travelling northward; and the difficulties they knew were great, for "there be no highways, but a multitude of little paths, some into the woods where they sow their corn, and the whole country covered with woods that a man cannot see anything but just before him. And the ways change often, for having cut down the wood and got off one crop they leave it, and wood soon grows over it again."

Worst of all is the want of good water, there being no springs in that north country, but only foul pools. Happily bang (Indian hemp) beaten to powder with jaggory (native sugar) was "a counter poison against the filthy venomous water." And so, with a store of pepper, garlic, combs, tobacco, and all sorts of iron ware, they made their first northern expedition. It gives us an idea at once of their patience and cautiousness that they spent eight or nine years in peddling about, and stealthily learning what they could about the roads, &c. Four years they were hindered by droughts, unfelt in their mountain homes, but ruinous in the



northern plains; but at last they started in good earnest, and to throw the magistrates of the towns they passed through off the scent, they paid for supplies of dried deer's flesh, which they wished to have provided against their return. Everywhere they were kindly treated; one governor, "being disposed to be merry, sent for people whose trade it is to dance and show tricks, the men beating drums, and the women turning brass basons on one of their fingers, twirling it round very swift and wondrous strange, tossing up balls into the air one after another to the number of nine, and catching them as they fall, and as fast as they do catch them still they toss them up again, so that there are always seven up in the air. The beholding them spent most part of the night, which we merrily called our old host's civility to us at our last parting, as it proved, indeed, though he, honest man, then little dreamed of any such thing."

Their aim was to strike across to the district inhabited by Malabars, and through it to the Dutch fort of Manaar; but their journey was a long one, for whenever they came near a high road they went aside into the woods, through which travelling was difficult. For defence against tigers or bears they had each a good knife and a small axe fastened to a long staff; "as for elephants, there is no standing against them, but the best defence is to flee from them." Once they had to hide from a party of deer-catchers, who manage in this wise: "Into a cane basket like a funnel they put fire and certain pitchy wood which gives an exceeding light. This they carry on their heads with the flame foremost, the basket hiding him that is under it and them that come behind. In their hands they carry three or four small bells, which they tingle as they go, that the noise of their steps should not be heard." A man with bow and arrows comes behind, and every kind of beast, except the wild hog, will stand and stare at the light, and so wait to be shot, "and they will distinguish one beast from another by the glittering of their eyes."

At another time they came upon an elephant hunt, and had much ado to creep into a hollow tree. At night they pushed on again, and were rejoiced to hear by the creaking boughs that the elephants were between them and the hunters' voices; "for a very good guard these elephants were, and methought like the darkness that came between Israel and the Egyptians."

Then, having passed all the tame inhabitants, they began to fear lest the Veddahs might see and slay them; the Veddahs being wild people who live in separate pairs, having no idea even of a household, the young going off as soon as they are old enough, like the young of birds.

After many perils they got into the Malabar country; and here they found the woods so full of thorns and shrubby bushes, and so thronged with elephants, which they kept at bay by flinging lighted brands, that they took to the river's edge, and made their way upon the sand.

At last, "about four of the clock on Saturday afternoon, October 18th, 1679, which day God grant us grace that we may never forget," they reached the Dutch fort of Aripo, whence they were passed on to Manaar. There the captain of the castle received them with great kindness, "and it seemed not a little strange to us, who had so long eat our meat on leaves, sitting on the ground, now to sit on chairs and eat out of china dishes at a table, we being in such habit and guise, our natural colour excepted, that we seemed not fit to eat with the captain's servants, no, nor with his slaves." Of course the people came flocking to see them, "and to enquire about husbands, sons, and relations which were prisoners in Candy."

Thence they are shipped to Colombo, where the governor, Ricklof van Gons, "standing in a large and stately room, paved with black and white stones," questioned them much about Candyan politics, and then feasted them right royally. Batavia is their next station; "and as we came to greater men so we found greater kindness, for the Governor of Batavia's reception of us and favours to us exceeded, if possible, those of the others. He told us he had omitted no means for our redemption . . . and then his own tailor was ordered to take measure of us, and furnish us with two suits of apparel. And oftentimes the general would send for me to his own table, at which sat only himself and lady, who was all bespangled with diamonds and pearls, the trumpet sounding all the while we did eat. We finding ourselves thus kindly entertained, and our habits changed, therefore cut off our beards, which we had brought with us out of our captivity, God having rolled away the reproach of Candy from us." The Dutchman was going to send them to England, when two English merchants bound for Bantam

agreed to take them thither, and the agent at Bantam put them on board the good ship *Cæsar*, which reached England in September, 1680.

It is worth noting that during Knox's captivity the French tried to get a settlement in Ceylon, and with their usual ill-success at colonising, failed; and very amusing, in contrast with the submissiveness of the Dutch, are the airs which their ambassador gave himself. First, he would insist on riding up to the palace instead of dismounting outside the city gate; then, when he came in great state to an audience, and the king kept him waiting, he stalked away to his lodging. "Some of the court would have stopped him by elephants that stood hard by, turning them to the gate through which he was to pass; but he would not be so stopped, but laid his hand upon his sword, so the people, seeing his resolution, called the elephants away and let him pass." The poor man suffered for his haughtiness; ambassador though he was, he was put in chains, and then he and his suite quarrelled, "his carriage being so imperious," and the suite maintained themselves by "stilling rack, and keeping the greatest taverns in the city."

A curious portrait, too, is that of old Father Vergonse, "a Genoese born, of the Jesuits' order, who, when the king asked him if it would not be better for him to lay aside his old coat and cap and do as two other priests had done—receive honour from him? replied that he boasted more in that old habit and the name of Jesus than in all the honour that he could do him. For which saying the king valued him all the more; and he had a pretty library about him, and died in his bed of old age; whereas the other two priests in the king's service died miserably, one of a canker, and the other, by the king's order, was trampled to death by elephants."

Further details of Knox's book we cannot give. The frontispiece is a portrait of him from a picture painted in 1695—a good English face somewhat of the Oliver Cromwell type, and there is a curious dedication to the East India Company—of which Sir Josiah Child, of Childs' Bank, was then governor—regretting that "this book is the whole return I made from the Indies after twenty years' stay there." This is followed by an attestation from the secretary of the Honorable East India Company's Court, that they esteem the book worthy of credit, and have encouraged him to make it public; and then

comes a letter from no less a man than Sir Christopher Wren, saying he has read the MS., which to him seems written with great truth and integrity, and he recommends it to be published, as likely to give great satisfaction to the curious.

We know plenty about Ceylon as it is, but there is a good deal of interest in reading what it was and how Europeans fared there two hundred and twenty years ago.

#### HOPE.

I LAY in grief,  
And Hope drew near to where I tossed alone  
Without relief,  
And paused a moment when she heard that moan;  
Then raised her glowing eyes and met mine own.  
Never a word she said,  
Yet still I gazed and still was comforted.  
Then bending low with wond'rous grace  
She laid her hand upon my eyes,  
Her cool hand on my burning face,  
And at her touch bright visions rise,  
Fresh woods and streams and unimagined skies.

In softest tone  
She sang the song that has no close,  
That deathless song which no one knows,  
Save she alone;  
The song that leaves no memory,  
The song of endless victory  
And future love;  
And as I listened to the voice above  
I felt as one returning from the dead;  
Slowly I rose and raised my drooping head.

#### AL FRESCO.

##### I.

AMONG the changes which have gradually come over London, may be noted the decline and departure of its pleasure-grounds. Land increasing in value, and the inhabitants multiplying more and more, the city bursting its original boundaries, and covering the country round about with a sort of overflow of bricks and mortar, little room has been left for the bowling greens, grass plots and gardens, such as were once to be counted among the appurtenances of houses situated even in the heart of the capital. Alteration has occurred, moreover, in the manners and customs of our citizens; or they have become in these later days more susceptible of climatic influences. They no longer entertain themselves of evenings in the open air; they dread too much the possibilities of bleak winds or wet weather. They prefer to be pleased by musical or theatrical performances under cover. Formerly Londoners lived much more of an out-of-door life; the city was rich in public gardens and al fresco places of pleasure. One after the other all have gone. Music-halls thrive and theatres flourish; but our Vauxhalls have vanished.

Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, were genuine gardens once, with archery butts, a tilt yard, a bowling green, a bathing pond, and a pheasant yard. The name was due to a jet or spring of water, which upon the pressure of the foot spirted up and "wetted whoever was foolish or ignorant enough to tread upon it." Mechanical water springs were deemed excellent practical jokes in the days of Elizabeth, and indeed long afterwards. Such devices existed in recent years at Chatsworth and at Enstone, in Oxfordshire. The bathing pond was supplied by leaden pipes from St. James's Fields. In an account of certain expenses incurred for "needful reparacons" of Spring Gardens, in 1614, appears a charge of four shillings for "two clucking hens to set upon the pheasant eggs." There was an ordinary at Spring Gardens, the charge being six shillings per meal; and much drinking of wine under the trees went on all day long. The company stayed until midnight, refreshing themselves at "a certain cabaret" in the middle of the gardens, with tarts, neat's tongues, salt meats, and Rhenish wine. "Shall we make a fling to London, and see how the spring appears there in the Spring Gardens; and in Hyde Park, to see the races, horse and foot?" asks one of the characters in Brome's comedy, *A Jovial Crew*, 1652. Evelyn records in 1658 that he "went to see a coach race in Hyde Park, and collationed in Spring Gardens." But this was possibly the new Spring Gardens, opened at the north-east corner of the Haymarket, "in the fields beyond the Mews," where was built "a fair house and two bowling-greens, made to entertain gamesters and bowlers," at a cost of £4,000. For Evelyn had previously noted the seizing and shutting up of Spring Gardens by Cromwell and his partisans in 1654, so that the Mulberry Garden had become a fashionable place of rendezvous and refreshment for ladies and gallants. In a glowing description of Spring Gardens, published in 1659, mention is made of the "thickets and enclosures, the solemnness of the grove, the warbling of the birds, &c." The grounds, it is stated, gave entrance into "the spacious walks at St. James's."

Spring Gardens opened again after Cromwell and his partisans had closed them; but they were now known as the Old Spring Gardens, to distinguish them from the New Spring Gardens established at Vauxhall about 1660. And presently houses were erected upon the ground, known as Inner Spring Gardens and

Outer Spring Gardens. The place had ceased to exist as a public resort for purposes of entertainment. The New Spring Gardens in the Haymarket did not long survive. "Lammas-money," on account of Piccadilly House and Bowling Green was paid, however, as late as 1670. The Tennis Court in James's Street is the last vestige of the Haymarket or Piccadilly Spring Gardens. The Mulberry Gardens occupied the site of the present Buckingham Palace and Gardens. The grounds were demised by Charles the Second, in 1673, to Bennet, Earl of Arlington, at a nominal rent. Pepys writes in 1668: "To the Mulberry Gardens, where I never was before, and find it a very silly place, worse than Spring Gardens, and but little company, only a wilderness here that is somewhat pretty." In the following year Pepys was regaled at the Mulberry Gardens with a Spanish olio, and pronounced it "a very noble dish, such as I never saw before or any more of." James the First had concerned himself about the planting of mulberry trees, hoping to encourage the manufacture of English silks. In James's time Shakespeare had planted his famous mulberry tree at Stratford. Sedley wrote a comedy called *The Mulberry Garden*; and the dramatists, his contemporaries Shadwell, Etherege, and Wycherley, make frequent mention of the place. John Dryden, wearing a sword and a "Chedreux wig," was wont to eat tarts at the Mulberry Garden with his friend, Madame Reeve. The following lines occur in *Dr. King's Art of Cookery*, 1709:

The fate of things lies always in the dark;  
What Cavalier would know St. James's Park?  
For Locket's stands where gardens once did spring,  
And wild ducks quack where grasshoppers did sing;  
A princely palace on that space does rise  
Where Sedley's noble muse found mulberries.

Locket's was a fashionable ordinary or restaurant, which stood on the ground once part of Old Spring Gardens, and now occupied by Drummond's banking-house, Charing Cross.

Pepys also mentions 'Sparagus Gardens, a place of amusement, concerning which even antiquaries have little to tell. It was situate in Lambeth Marsh, and adjoined the better known Cuper's Gardens. A comedy by Richard Brome, called *The 'Sparagus Gardens*, was acted at the Salisbury Court Theatre in 1635. Pepys writes in 1668: "To the fishmonger's, and bought a couple of lobsters, and over to the 'Sparagus Gardens, thinking to have met Mr. Pierce and his wife, and Knipp."



Evelyn, in 1661, found the New Spring Gardens at Lambeth "a pretty contrived plantation." Pepys writes in 1665: "By water to Fox Hall, and there walked an hour alone observing the several humours of the citizens, that were this holiday pulling off cherries and God knows what." The manor of Vauxhall, properly Fulke's Hall, derived its name from Fulke de Breaute, who married Margaret, Earl Baldwin's mother, and thus obtained the wardship of her son. The estate subsequently passing into the possession of the Crown, was granted by Edward the Third to the Black Prince, who gave it to the church of Canterbury. Upon the suppression of the monasteries, and the appropriation of church lands, Henry the Eighth confirmed the Dean and Chapter in their possession of the manor. During the two centuries that Vauxhall Gardens flourished, it probably occurred to few visitors that they were treading upon ground which was so far consecrated, that it had been the absolute property of the church. In later times, however, the estate was described as "copyhold, containing eight acres, subject to a heriot or fine of five hundred pounds to the Prince of Wales, the lord of the manor."

Vauxhall Gardens became a famous resort, the model or pattern upon which other gardens were formed, until "Vauxhall" was recognised all the world over as the proper title for an open-air nocturnal place of entertainment. As early as 1668 Pepys had written of his supper there "in an arbour," with Henry Killigrew, "a rogue newly come back out of France, but still in disgrace at court," young Newport, and others. "But, Lord!" he exclaims, "their mad talk did make my heart ache!" Refreshments "in an arbour," it may be noted, were long deemed peculiarly agreeable to British taste and appetite. The year before Pepys had observed upon the pleasantness and cheapness of Vauxhall, "for a man may spend what he will or nothing, all as one." He had noted, too, the number of the company, and how "mighty divertising" it was "to hear the nightingale and the birds, and here fiddles, and there a harp, and here a Jew's trumpet, and here laughing, and there fine people walking, &c." Jew's harps, by-the-bye, survive, and are often heard; but a Jew's trumpet strikes one as a less familiar instrument. Pepys, however, had also to consider "how rude some of the gallants of the town are become;" and to be troubled by "the confidence of the vice of the age."

It was in 1667, according to Aubrey's Surrey, that Sir Samuel Moreland, having obtained a lease of Vauxhall House and grounds, built there a fine room, the inside all of looking-glass and fountains, with a figure of Punchinello, very well carved, on the outside, holding up a dial, which the high winds subsequently destroyed.

The new Spring Gardens obtained frequent mention in the comedies of Wycherley, Etherege, Sedley, and Congreve; and it may be remembered how the Spectator and his friend Sir Roger de Coverley took water at the Temple Stairs, and paid a visit to Fox Hall. It was the month of May; and Spring Garden was pronounced to be especially pleasant at that period of the year. The Spectator, considering the fragrant of the walks and flowers, with the choirs of birds that sang under the trees, and the loose tribe of people that walked under their shades, could not but look on the place as "a kind of Mahometan Paradise." Sir Roger was reminded of a little coppice by his house in the country, which his chaplain used to call an aviary of nightingales. "You must understand," said the knight, "that there is nothing in the world that pleases a man in love so much as your nightingale. Ah, Mr. Spectator, the many moonlight nights that I have walked by myself, and thought on the widow by the music of the nightingale!" They concluded their walk with a glass of Burton ale and a slice of hung beef; the good knight sending a waiter with the remainder of their supper to the waterman. The waiter was about to be saucy because of the oddness of this proceeding; but the Spectator "ratified the knight's commands with a peremptory look."

In 1732, New Spring Gardens came into the possession of Jonathan Tyers, who opened them in June with a grand entertainment called *Ridotto al fresco*, the Prince of Wales being present, and the company wearing dominoes, masks, and lawyer's gowns. The charge for admission was one guinea; four hundred persons were present, and, to preserve order, one hundred of the foot guards were posted round the gardens. The title of Spring Gardens was continued until 1785, when they were called the Royal Vauxhall Gardens. To the last, however, the magistrate's license was always applied for on account of "The Spring Garden, Vauxhall." In 1739, the admission was one shilling, but many subscribed for the season of three months. It was publicly

announced: "A thousand tickets only will be delivered out at twenty-five shillings each, the silver of every ticket to be worth three shillings and two pence, and to admit two persons every evening—Sundays excepted—through the season. Every person coming without a ticket to pay one shilling each time for admittance. No servants in livery to walk in the gardens. All subscribers are desired not to permit their tickets to get into the hands of persons of evil repute, it being absolutely necessary to exclude all such." Hogarth, who was living in Lambeth Terrace, seems to have taken a lively interest in the gardens under Tyers's management; he designed the tickets, and the pictures in the saloon and supper boxes, the paintings in the saloon being executed at the cost of five hundred pounds each by Hayman and Mortimer. A statue of Handel, by Roubiliac, stood in the centre of the gardens. In recognition of Hogarth's services, Tyers presented him with a gold ticket of perpetual admission for six persons any night. The concerts were at first purely instrumental, but in 1745 singing was introduced; "the eccentric Tom Collet" leading the band, and Dr. Worgun playing the organ. Westminster Bridge was not completed until 1750; for the accommodation of his performers, therefore, Tyers built a handsome barge, which carried them from Palace Yard Old Stairs and back again when the entertainments were over.

In *The Connoisseur* for 1755, there is enumeration of the changes in public pleasures consequent upon the varying of the seasons. The theatrical gentry having dissipated the gloom of winter evenings, now that the long days are coming on, are described as "packing up their tragedy wardrobes, together with a sufficient quantity of thunder and lightning for the delight and amazement of the country;" while the several public gardens near the metropolis trim their trees, level their walks, and burnish their lamps for the reception of the Londoners. "At Vauxhall the artificial ruins are repaired, the cascade is made to spout with several additional streams of block tin; and they have touched up all the pictures which were damaged last year by the fingering of those curious connoisseurs who could not be satisfied without feeling whether the figures were alive." Then follows an account of a visit to Vauxhall, paid by an honest citizen, his wife, and two daughters. They are regaled with a chicken and a

shilling plate of ham. "The old gentleman, at every bit he put in his mouth, amused himself by saying: 'There goes twopence, there goes threepence, there goes a groat. Zounds! a man at these places should not have a swallow as wide as a tom-tit.'" Five years before, Walpole had visited Vauxhall upon the invitation of Lady Caroline Petersham. It was a river party, "a boat of French horns attending;" and little Miss Ashe, "the pollard ash," as her friends called her, singing to entertain the company. Lord Granby arrived "very drunk, from Jenny's Whim," a tea-garden at Chelsea; and Lord Orford, Horace's brother, was fetched from an adjoining box to help mince chickens. "We minced seven chickens into a china dish, which Lady Caroline stewed over a lamp, with three pats of butter and a flagon of water, stirring, and rattling, and laughing, and we every minute expecting the dish to fly about our ears. She had brought Betty the fruit-girl with hampers of strawberries and cherries from Rogers's, and made her wait upon us and then made her sup by us at a little table. . . . It was three o'clock before we got home."

Upon the death of Jonathan Tyers, in 1767, his son, Thomas Tyers, the Tom Tyers of Dr. Johnson and Boswell, and the Tom Restless of the *Idler*, No. 48, succeeded to the management of the gardens. Boswell has left a glowing account of "that excellent place of public amusement, Vauxhall Gardens, which," he writes, "must ever be an estate to its proprietor, as it is peculiarly adapted to the taste of the English nation; there being a mixture of curious show, gay exhibition, music—vocal and instrumental—not too refined for the general ear; for all which only a shilling is paid; and, though last not least, good eating and drinking for those who choose to purchase that regale." The best English singers appeared from time to time in the gardens. At first they objected to lend their services, records Parke in his *Memoirs*, "so strange and uncouth did the proposal appear to them of singing in the open air . . . but the trial was no sooner made than the judicious improvement was so highly admired, as to give the proprietor ample reason to rejoice at its adoption." Fireworks, it is said, were not exhibited until 1798, and even then were only displayed occasionally, although of the smaller place of entertainment known as Cuper's Gardens, *The Connoisseur* writes

in 1755, that "its magazine is furnished with an extraordinary supply of gun-powder, to be shot off in squibs and sky-rockets, or whirled away in blazing suns and catherine-wheels." The price of admission was one shilling up to the summer of 1792, when, because of increased decorations and attractions, the charge was raised to two shillings. "I cannot approve of this," writes Boswell; "the company may be more select, but a number of the honest commonalty are, I fear, excluded from sharing in elegant and innocent entertainments." Subsequently the admission became three-and-sixpence and four shillings.

The elder Tyers was naturally querulous, and his temper was much tried by the wet weather which often grievously affected his seasons at Vauxhall. To him seems really due the lament afterwards appropriated by Mr. Graves in the comedy of Money, to the effect that "if he had been brought up to be a hatter, he believed little boys would have been born without heads." A farmer once plagued him with enquiries as to when he intended to open his gardens. He asked in return why the farmer was so anxious for information on the subject. "Why, sir," he said, "I'm thinking of sowing my turnips, and I want to know for certain when we shall have rain."

Vauxhall long continued to be a most fashionable resort, enjoying the special patronage of George, Prince of Wales. The season usually commenced on the king's birthday, June 4th; the prince's birthday, August 12th, being the great festival of the year. Then there were galas to celebrate the happy recovery of the king, in honour of distinguished foreign visitors, or because of victories achieved by our land and sea forces, or the proclamation of peace. In 1813, occurred the Vittoria fête, to celebrate Lord Wellington's triumphs in the Peninsula. The Duke of York, commander-in-chief, by desire of the Prince Regent, with the assistance of one hundred stewards of the first distinction, presided at a grand dinner of a thousand gentlemen, at two guineas per head. There was afterwards a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music. Some twelve thousand persons visited the gardens, "and the difficulty at night of procuring refreshments was such," writes Parke, the oboe player, "that in various parts of the splendidly illuminated gardens were seen a brace of dukes regaling themselves from a wine-bottle and glasses they

held in their hands; a bevy of countesses devouring a cold chicken which they had separated with their delicate fingers; and a plump citizen's wife, who would have fainted had she not been timely relieved by a glass of water with a little brandy in it. Amidst the elegant confusion which prevailed, I had the good fortune to sup in a private room in the house of the proprietor of the gardens with some friends, who were afterwards joined by the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan, one of the stewards, whose brilliant conversation I had the pleasure to share till daylight the next morning."

The first balloon ascent from Vauxhall was Garnerin's, in 1802, when he rose four thousand feet and descended in a parachute. In 1817, and for some following seasons, Madame Saqui, the famous rope-dancer, appeared at Vauxhall, and occasioned much excitement by her daring performances. In 1828 Italian operas were performed in the saloon, and a ballet-theatre was opened for serious and comic dancing. In 1830 Sir Henry Bishop was musical director, and a dramatic company was engaged for the performance of burlettas. But already the glory of Vauxhall was passing away. It survived its illustrious patron, George the Fourth, but only to linger on in a decrepit and degraded state. Parke, even in 1830, questioned whether even Bishop's superior ability could restore the place to its "pristine excellence," although he might, "by inundating it with the powerful strains of his harmony, partially cleanse the Angean stable." Croker, in his edition of Boswell, 1847, spoke contemptuously of Vauxhall, as "long closed, and only occasionally used for letting off a balloon or some such exhibition." But this was incorrect; the end had not yet come.

In 1838 the charge for admission had been reduced to one shilling. Fashion had departed; there was an effort to attract popularity—even vulgarity. Balloon ascents were now frequent; a circus was added, with horses from Astley's. Poses plastiques were brought from Paris, and a chorus from the German opera at Drury Lane. In 1841 the estate was offered for sale, but bought in. Certain of the old decorations were disposed of, however, including the Hogarth and Hayman pictures, now in a very infirm condition. They produced but a few shillings. In 1845 Musard conducted the orchestra, and masquerades were given, very dissolute as



to character. In 1846, under Mr. Wardell's management, came further violation of Vauxhall traditions. The famous oil-lamps, many-coloured and multitudinous, were replaced by gas-jets, and the members of the orchestra abandoned the cocked hats they had worn from time immemorial. The master of the ceremonies—for of old such a functionary had presided—was no longer visible, or was represented only by a transparent portrait of the deceased Mr. Simpson, in a courteous attitude, full-dressed, pantalooned and pumped, lifting his chapeau bras to greet the visitor. In 1854 the Secretary of State interfered to prevent certain dangerous and cruel exhibitions—balloons carrying horses, or with acrobats on trapezes slung from the cars. In 1859 the gardens finally closed. The site is now built over and occupied by St. Peter's Church, a school of art, and numerous streets.

Vauxhall outlived many of its rivals. On the Surrey side of the Thames the Waterloo Bridge Road runs through the centre of what was once Cuper's Gardens, known commonly as Cupid's Gardens, a place of entertainment of the Vauxhall pattern, first opened to the public in 1678. Aubrey in his *Account of Surrey* writes, "Near the Bankside lies a very pleasant garden, in which are fine walks, known by the name of Cupid's Gardens. They are the estate of Jesus College, in Oxford, and erected by one who keeps a public-house; which, with the convenience of its harbours, walks, and several remains of Greek and Roman antiquities, have made this place much frequented." The gardens obtained their name from Boydel Cuper, a gardener in the employ of Thomas, Earl of Arundel. When Arundel House in the Strand was taken down, the gardener obtained many mutilated marbles from his master's famous collection, carried them across the river, and erected them as decorations of his gardens. Fragments of an antique figure were even discovered in the mud of the Thames when Sir William Chambers was digging the foundation of a portion of Somerset House; and it was supposed that the gardener might have lost certain of his treasures in the endeavour to convey them over the water. A Mrs. Evans, whose husband had formerly kept the old tavern, the Hercules Pillars, in Fleet Street, opposite Clifford's Inn, became tenant of Cuper's Gardens in 1736, erected an organ and an orchestra, and provided entertainments of fireworks. Cuper's Gardens, indeed, became famous for fireworks. There is extant an

old song in commemoration of the pleasures of the place, beginning:

'Twas down in Cuper's gardens  
For pleasure I did go,  
To see the fairest flowers  
That in that garden grow;  
The first it was the jessamine,  
The lily, pink, and rose,  
And surely they're the fairest flowers  
That in that garden grows.  
I'd not walked in that garden  
The part of half an hour,  
When there I saw two pretty maids  
Sitting under a shady bower.  
The first was lovely Nancy,  
So beautiful and fair,  
The other was a virgin,  
Who did the laurel wear.

The gardens maintained their popularity for some years, but were suppressed in 1753, and converted to the uses of trade. J. T. Smith, in his *Life of Nollekens*, records that he walked over the gardens "when they were occupied by Messrs. Beaufoy for their wine and vinegar works, and I then saw many of the old lamp-irons along the paling of the gardens." Dr. Johnson related that once, driving in a coach by Cuper's Gardens, then untenanted, he jestingly proposed that he, Beauclerk, and Langton, should take them; "and we amused ourselves with scheming how we should all do our parts." Old Lady Sydney Beauclerk, the mother of Topham Beauclerk, was much angered, however, and said, "an old man should not put such things in young people's heads." Johnson noted for the information of Boswell: "She had no notion of a joke, sir; had come late into life, and had a mighty unpliant understanding."

Vauxhall had other rivals and imitators on its own side of the Thames. There opened in 1698 a place of entertainment, called Lambeth Wells. A mineral spring had been discovered, and the waters were dispensed at "a penny per quart to the affluent, and gratis to the poor." A performance of music commenced so early as seven in the morning; the charge for admission being threepence. A monthly concert, on a more important scale, was afterwards given under the direction of Mr. Starling Goodwin, organist of St. Saviour's Church; lectures were also delivered with experiments in natural philosophy by Erasmus King, who had been coachman to Dr. Desaguliers, the price of admission being raised to sixpence. The place existed so late as 1752, when "a penny wedding, after the Scotch fashion, for the benefit of a young couple," was advertised to be celebrated there. But the Wells were held to be a nuisance at

last; the premises were closed for some time, the concert-room being afterwards let as a Methodist meeting-house. Eventually a public-house, with the sign of the Fountain, supplying strong rather than mineral waters, was the only surviving trace of Lambeth Wells.

There was a Spa, too, in existence between 1784 and 1804, farther on at Bermondsey, of which the Spa Road is now the only relic; while on the Lambeth side of Westminster Bridge flourished, between 1788 and 1799, the Apollo Gardens, opened by one Clagget, an ingenious musician, who in 1793 published a description of an organ he had invented, "made without pipes, strings, bells, or glasses; the only instrument in the world that will never require to be re-tuned." The gardens possessed a spacious concert-room, a number of elegant pavilions or alcoves, ornamented with paintings, "relating to romantic histories, particularly the different adventures of Don Quixote;" with a fine orchestra in the centre of the grounds. Finch's Grotto, "on the plan of Vauxhall," was opened to the public in 1770, and thrived for some time. This was situate in Gravel Lane, Southwark. "An orchestra and a band of musicians, added to the rural character of the place, drew a numerous body of visitors." Little is known of the grotto or of the proprietor, William Finch, who gave his name to it; but a story has survived concerning one of its singers, a North Briton named Snows. He was, it seems, required to sing a ballad beginning:

Where no ripened summer glows  
On the lap of northern snows,  
Only let my nymph be there  
Jocund spring will soon appear.

He was suddenly interrupted by an Irish visitor, who exclaimed with an oath of indignation: "Och, Mister Northern Snows with his nymph on his lap; a mighty pretty scene to entertain decent people with!"

No doubt the closing years of Vauxhall suffered from the competition of the Surrey Zoological Gardens, near the Elephant and Castle. These grounds were laid out in 1831-2 by Mr. Cross, who had owned the menagerie at Exeter Change, and afterwards at the King's Mews, Charing Cross. Cunningham, in his Handbook of London, 1850, described the animals as superior to those possessed by the Zoological Society in the Regent's Park. But the Surrey Gardens, in truth, depended for success less upon zoology than upon music and

fireworks. A sheet of water, some three acres in extent, added greatly to the attractions of the place, and was of service to the large paintings of Vesuvius and Hecla, Rome and Venice, Old London, Hamburg, and Edinburgh, which, from time to time, occupied the grounds, and formed excuses for brilliant displays of fireworks. A large hall, said to be capable of holding twelve thousand persons, was erected in 1856, to be totally destroyed by fire five years later. In this hall a public dinner was given to the Guards returned from the Crimea in 1856; in the same year, owing to a false alarm of fire raised during one of Mr. Spurgeon's religious services in the hall, eight persons were killed, and thirty seriously injured. For some time the place was devoted to the use of St. Thomas's Hospital during the rebuilding of that institution. The Surrey Gardens, following the fate of Vauxhall, have since been sold for building purposes.

### MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

SUMMER had waned to autumn. The roses were all dead, and even the chrysanthemums hung their dragged heads miserably. My friends the rooks still sailed about, not in an azure sea, but in a sea of turbulent, drifting clouds, and a wind that drove their black bodies all to one side as they flew, and threatened to shake them off the pine-tree tops, where they clung fluttering and chattering, and, I have no doubt, speculating as to the sadly changed condition of affairs in general. For my own part, I love the autumn, and the pungent odour of the dead and dying leaves that make a rustling brown carpet on the grass. Yet this autumn I was less contented of spirit than my wont. And why?

Well; it was hard to define my mood exactly. Life had been very sweet and fair to me since ever I could remember; it had been like a melody all in time and tune; now, there was a jarring note. For what is so trying to any of us as to see that between two people whom we love a cloud has arisen, and is gradually hiding the one heart from the trust and confidence of the other?

What was it that had changed the estimation in which my dear Miss Mary held my equally dear school-friend?

I did not know then; and only by the light of future events could I even guess the nature of the estrangement. It had

been my happy custom, as our weekly half-holiday came round, to go wandering in the fields or in my wood with Eulalie; now, each Saturday, some plan or other, some expedition to the county town for shopping purposes, or to visit some friends at a distance, always came about; and on all these occasions Miss Mary seemed to set her heart on having me for her companion, and never Eulalie.

I used to look back wistfully sometimes, as we set off together up the carriage-way, to catch a glimpse, at the school-room window, of a dark sleek head bent over a book or a work-frame. How I longed to question Miss Mary about all these strange things. Nay, now and then I have been hardly able to see before me for the hot tears that started to my eyes; but to question the why and wherefore of anything either of the Miss Sylvesters did was to break the eleventh commandment at Summerfield; and so my eyes only, and not my tongue, pleaded for Eulalie.

That I loved her the more vehemently, the more defiantly, for this strange dwelling "out in the cold," goes without saying; yet in my letters to papa I made no mention of the perplexities that beset me. It would have grated upon my sense of what was delicately and strictly honourable, to have commented upon Miss Mary's conduct in any way. Nor did Eulalie appear wishful for arms to be taken up in her defence; but, rather, she acquiesced quietly in the inevitable, and shunned the closeness of that intimacy that had been so dear a thing to me.

Once, as I sat reading in the wood, and none of the other girls chanced to be within sight or hearing, I heard the crackling of twigs and the rustle of a dress, and saw the boughs of the hazel-nut bushes parted to let Eulalie pass. It is one of the pictures on which I can still look back, the parting of the green branches, then laden with their ripe fruit, and the beautiful face of my friend looking at me from beneath their shadow.

"What is it?" I cried, flinging my book down upon the grass at my feet, and springing forward to meet her. "Oh, how glad I am you've come. We shan't have many more such days as this, Eulalie—it's almost as warm as June—sit down, and let us have a 'big chat;' how nice it is to talk English as fast as one can on a holiday, just to make the best use of one's time."

She had let the hazel boughs fall back into their place, and stood there against

the background of their massed foliage, looking at me with a wistful sadness.

I caught her hands, and finding them cold as death, covered them with kisses, to try and put some warmth into them. It is an odd peculiarity of mine, that if my feelings are deeply stirred, my ready tongue is dumb; so now, seeing that some great trouble was over Eulalie, nothing came readily from my lips save those silent kisses.

Presently she drew her hands from mine, and her voice trembled a little as she said:

"Nell, have you heard from your father lately? Do you think he has forgotten what you asked him to do—for me?"

"Forgotten!" I cried, in wide-eyed astonishment at the suggestion. "Oh, dear, no; papa never forgets what I ask him, but it takes time."

"Time!" she cried, with a sudden vehemence as startling as it was rare. "Oh! I am weary, weary of it all. I wish I was going away now—now, this very moment——"

"From Summerfield?" I gasped.

"From Summerfield," she answered, a wild gleam lighting up her lovely eyes, and a hard and—I hated to think it then, I hate to write it now—a cruel expression changing and marring the lines of her mouth.

I glanced down, and saw that the hands that had writhed themselves from mine were clenched hard and fast.

My utter amazement—doubtless written, like most of my emotions, in broad letters on my face—seemed to rouse her to some effort at self-control. She drew a long, shuddering breath, and then in a moment the statue of Nemesis became the timid maiden, with eyes softly brown as dead leaves under water.

She touched me playfully under the chin with a finger-tip.

"Bring your owl's eyes down to their natural size again," she said laughing. "Do you think that everyone thinks Summerfield a—what was it you called it the other day?—Land of Beulah, eh, Nell?"

"It has been that to me," I answered hotly. "I shall always look back and think of it as that—a place 'very sweet and pleasant,'" I added, quoting John Bunyan defiantly.

"You see, you haven't to teach the young idea how to count 'one, two, three, one, two, three; the cat's in the cupboard and can't see me.'"

"Eulalie, you are talking great nonsense,"



I said, laughing at her words all the same, "but I daresay it is very tiresome teaching the little ones their music. I never thought how different it must be for you and for me; but still, even if papa does hear of some nice children for you to go and be governess to, it will come to the same thing, won't it? 'one, two, three,' over and over again?"

"Yes; the same thing, of course, but with—a difference——"

At that moment a rushing and scrambling among the bushes made itself audible, and Amy Ladbrook, a small child of six, broke through the cover, and passed by us, flushed and panting, in the character of a hare hotly pursued by the hounds.

"Write to your father to-night—promise me, Nell—do you hear?" said Eulalie hurriedly; and I had only time to say Yes, before the "pack" were upon us, a chattering, shouting, laughing bonnie team of little English lassies.

"Has the hare gone by here, Nell?" cried the leader of the troop, while the "harriers" threw themselves down on the grass, fanning their hot faces, and making about as much noise as my friends the rooks.

"It isn't fair to ask that—is it now, Miss Le Breton?" said a small maid, whose face looked like a ripe apple, and whose black elf-locks had become a hopeless tangle that had to be pushed back every minute.

Eulalie was just going to reply, when all at once the various "hounds" who were reclining on the green sward started to their feet, and the small person who had last spoken began to make vehement efforts at "putting straight" the gooseberry-bush of her locks.

Miss Mary had come into the wood, and was making her way slowly towards us.

"Never mind, dear," she said, as she saw the child struggling to attain to something like neatness; "play is play, and I don't mind what figure you make of yourself, only don't run about too long, and get too hot," she added with a smile. Then she turned to me:

"Nellie, I was looking for you; I want you to come with me to the Vicarage."

She did not speak to my companion, and I was troubled at the fact that the traces of tears were on her cheek.

"It's a letter from Polly's country, I suppose," I thought to myself as I followed Miss Mary towards the house.

The mystery of those foreign letters was no longer a riddle to me, for Eulalie had solved it; indeed, she was in some sort connected with the story, since, years back, her mother had tried to befriend the worthless brother whose career of vice and dissipation was the "family skeleton" of the three sisters Sylvester. Like a chain this home-trouble had bound their lives. The savings of each year had had to go to pay "poor Charley's" debts, left as a legacy to his native land, when he went out to Ceylon to try his fortune as a coffee-planter. Whether he had there planted anything save an additional crop of "wild oats" was doubtful. His demands upon the three hard-working women at home continued; and he always declared that some disaster threatened to overwhelm him, unless "such and such a sum" was forthcoming "by an early mail."

"Poor Charley" was younger by many years than his sisters, and had been the "mother's darling;" that dead mother of whom those dear ladies spoke with such tender reverence, and whose dying words, "Do what you can for Charley," had all the sacredness of a last trust. In the days when first this trouble began to press upon them so sorely, Eulalie's mother had given sympathy and kindly help; therefore her child seemed to have a peculiar claim upon their love and care, and Eulalie had found a home in her need at Summerfield.

When Miss Mary reached the Vicarage, the good vicar was busy hoeing weeds out of the garden-path. When engaged in these horticultural pursuits he presented a very droll appearance, with his coat-sleeves turned up, his trowsers in the same condition, and a straw hat, about the size of Miss Theodosia's sun-shade, upon his head. When he saw us coming up the walk, he made a wild attempt to raise this head-gear in our honour, but the brim was wide and flabby, and the attempt a failure. Then he came forward, hoe in hand, and beamed upon us from behind his spectacles.

"I want a few moments' quiet talk with you, Mr. Girdstone," said Miss Mary.

"Will you go and sit with my sister, Nellie, or would you like to go and see my new rabbit-hutches?" said the vicar, turning to me.

Rabbits? why, if it had been ravening, roaring wolves, whose society I had been offered as an alternative to Miss Theodosia's, I should have rushed wildly into their embrace.

"I should like to see the rabbits very

much indeed," I said, as eagerly as though my "life's young dream" in the matter of hutches was about to be realised; and off I set towards the little white gate leading to the kitchen-garden. But I reckoned without my host, or rather, without my hostess. Tap, tap, tap, went Miss 'Dosia's finger, on the breakfast-room window; and I saw her head wagging to me to come in. Of course, there was no help for it, so I gave up the rabbits with a sigh, and betook myself into the house. What the vicar's sister said to me during that interview I cannot call to mind; I had, indeed, no mind to give to her words. My whole attention was concentrated upon the two figures pacing slowly up and down between the borders of London Pride that edged the pathways in the Vicarage garden.

How clearly it all comes back to me! The quaint figure of the vicar, with his ankles fully displayed, the big hat pushed to the very back of his head, and the hoe in his hand coming down every now and then on the gravel by way of emphasis to his words: beside him, my more than mother, her head drooping a little, and her face shaded from me by the grey falling ringlets. Now and again they stop—once I see Miss Mary hide her eyes a moment with her hand.

Miss Girdstone's voice brays on. I think she is telling me some story of the obstinacy of a certain demoralised parishioner of the female gender, who sold—instead of wearing—an under-garment made by her own fair hands. But in this I may have been mistaken, for where could a purchaser be found for a coat-of-mail of the raspy flannel used by Miss Theodosia as suitable clothing for the "poor and needy?"

Presently Miss Mary and I are upon our way home. The evening is drawing on, and from beneath a deep purple cloud the sun pours a flood of gold upon the distant hills. We are in the grey shadow of the coming night; but the hill-tops shine clear and fair. I can see one, darker than its fellows, clothed in firs, and I know that the water-falls are there, falling and whirling into the fern-edged basin where I had flung my pretty orchid in to die.

This makes me think of my father, and I call to mind that I have promised to write to him to-night. I have plenty of time to let my thoughts wander to all

these things, for Miss Mary is very silent; she is sad, too, but the look of perplexity that I had noticed in her face as we walked to Bromley is no longer there. Undaunted by the coming of the gloaming, a robin, perched upon a bough whose leaves are wearing their sober autumn livery of brown, sings his plaintive good-night song. I can see his little red throat swelling with the utterance of the clear, sweet notes, and though his bright eyes see us well enough, he does not care, but goes on making the best of the light that yet remains to him, just as if we were not there at all. I slip my hand into Miss Mary's, and we stand still till robin has done.

Truly a robin's song is not much to write of; but every voice of nature, however faint and small, brings a sense of joy to some hearts, and of these mine is one, and my dear Miss Mary's is another.

Besides, I listened to that "even-song" of robin's as a child listens to any sweet sound, and loves it, and I think I was never quite a child again; but something full of deeper thought and sadder knowledge.

It wanted more than an hour to prayer-time when we reached home; and I was hurrying across the hall, to "take time by the forelock" in the matter of the promised letter to Hazledene, when Miss Maria, key-basket in hand as usual, and a beaming smile upon her jovial face, met and stopped me.

"There is a letter for you from your father, Nell. It came by the late post—"

It was the custom for all our letters to be laid upon a certain table in the library, a room that entered upon the left of the hall-door. And now, as I went in search of mine, I thought as I did so: "What a good thing it is I waited till this evening. Who knows but what there is something about Eulalie in this very letter, and papa might have thought I was accusing him of forgetfulness?"

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**I**NDIGESTION is a weakness or want of power of the digestive juices in the stomach to convert what we eat and drink into healthy matter for the proper nourishment of the whole system. It is caused by everything which weakens the system in general, or the stomach in particular. From it proceed nearly all the diseases to which we are liable; for it is very certain that if we could always keep the stomach right we should only die by old age or accident. Indigestion produces a great variety of unpleasant sensations; amongst the most prominent of its miserable effects are a want of, or an inordinate appetite, sometimes attended with a constant craving for drink, a distension or feeling of enlargement of the stomach, flatulency, heartburn, pain in the stomach, acidity, unpleasant taste in the mouth, perhaps sickness, rumbling noise in the bowels; in some cases of depraved digestion there is nearly a complete disrelish for food, but still the appetite is not greatly impaired, as at the stated period of meals persons so afflicted can eat heartily, although without much gratification; a long train of nervous symptoms are also frequent attendants, general debility, great languidness, and incapacity for exertion. The minds of persons so afflicted frequently become irritable and desponding, and great anxiety is observable in the countenance; they appear thoughtful, melancholy, and dejected, under great apprehension of some imaginary danger, will start at any unexpected noise or occurrence, and become so agitated that they require some time to calm and collect themselves; yet for all this the mind is exhilarated

without much difficulty; pleasing events, society, will for a time dissipate all appearance of disease; but the excitement produced by an agreeable change vanishes soon after the cause has gone by. Other symptoms are, violent palpitations, restlessness, the sleep disturbed by frightful dreams and startings, and affording little or no refreshment; occasionally there is much moaning, with a sense of weight and oppression upon the chest, nightmare, &c.

It is almost impossible to enumerate all the symptoms of this first invader upon the constitution, as in a hundred cases of *Indigestion* there will probably be something peculiar to each; but be they what they may, they are all occasioned by the food becoming a burden rather than a support to the stomach; and in all its stages the medicine most wanted is that which will afford speedy and effectual assistance to the digestive organs, and give energy to the nervous and muscular systems—nothing can more speedily, or with more certainty, effect so desirable an object than *Norton's Extract of Camomile Flowers*. The herb has from time immemorial been highly esteemed in England as a grateful anodyne, imparting an aromatic bitter to the taste and a pleasing degree of warmth and strength to the stomach; and in all cases of indigestion, gout in the stomach, windy colic, and general weakness, it has for ages been strongly recommended by the most eminent practitioners as very useful and beneficial. The great, indeed only, objection to its use has been the large quantity of water which it takes to dissolve a small part of the flowers and



which must be taken with it into the stomach. It requires a quarter of a pint of boiling water to dissolve the soluble portion of one drachm of Camomile Flowers; and when one or even two ounces may be taken with advantage, it must at once be seen how impossible it is to take a proper dose of this wholesome herb in the form of tea; and the only reason why it has not long since been placed the very first in rank of all restorative medicines is, that in taking it the stomach has always been loaded with water, which tends in a great measure to counteract, and very frequently wholly to destroy the effect. It must be evident that loading a weak stomach with a large quantity of water, merely for the purpose of conveying into it a small quantity of medicine, must be injurious; and that the medicine must possess powerful renovating properties only to counteract the bad effects likely to be produced by the water. Generally speaking, this has been the case with Camomile Flowers, a herb possessing the highest restorative qualities, and when properly taken, decidedly the most speedy restorer, and the most certain preserver of health.

**NORTON'S CAMOMILE PILLS** are prepared by a peculiar process, accidentally discovered, and known only to the proprietor, and which he firmly believes to be one of the most valuable modern discoveries in medicine, by which all the essential and extractive matter of more than an ounce of the flowers is concentrated in four moderate-sized pills. Experience has afforded the most ample proof that they possess all the fine aromatic and stomachic properties for which the herb has been esteemed; and, as they are taken into the stomach unencumbered by any diluting or indigestible substance, in the same degree has their benefit been more immediate and decided. Mild in their operation and pleasant in their effect, they may be taken at any age, and under any circumstances, without danger or inconvenience. A person exposed to cold and wet a whole day or night could not possibly receive any injury from taking them, but, on the contrary, they would effectually prevent a cold being taken. After a long acquaintance with and strict observance of the medicinal properties of *Norton's Camomile Pills*, it is only doing them justice to say, that they are really the most valuable of all **TOXIC MEDICINES**. By the word tonic is meant a medicine

which gives strength to the stomach sufficient to digest in proper quantities all wholesome food, which increases the power of every nerve and muscle of the human body, or, in other words, invigorates the nervous and muscular systems. The solidity or firmness of the whole tissue of the body, which so quickly follows the use of *Norton's Camomile Pills*, their certain and speedy effect in repairing the partial dilapidations from time or intemperance, and their lasting salutary influence on the whole frame, is most convincing, that in the smallest compass is contained the largest quantity of the tonic principle, of so peculiar a nature as to pervade the whole system, through which it diffuses health and strength sufficient to resist the formation of disease, and also to fortify the constitution against contagion; as such their general use is strongly recommended as a preventative during the prevalence of malignant fever or other infectious diseases, and to persons attending sick-rooms they are invaluable, as in no one instance have they ever failed in preventing the taking of illness, even under the most trying circumstances.

As *Norton's Camomile Pills* are particularly recommended for all stomach complaints or indigestion, it will probably be expected that some advice should be given respecting diet, though after all that has been written upon the subject, after the publication of volume upon volume, after the country has, as it were, been inundated with practical essays on diet as a means of prolonging life, it would be unnecessary to say more, did we not feel it our duty to make the humble endeavour of inducing the public to regard them not, but to adopt that course which is dictated by nature, by reason, and by common sense. Those persons who study the wholesomes, and are governed by the opinion of writers on diet, are uniformly both unhealthy in body and weak in mind. There can be no doubt that the palate is designed to inform us what is proper for the stomach, and of course that must best instruct us what food to take and what to avoid; we want no other adviser. Nothing can be more clear than that those articles which are agreeable to the taste were by nature intended for our food and sustenance, whether liquid or solid, foreign or of native production; if they are pure and unadulterated, no harm need be dreaded by

their use; they will only injure by abuse. Consequently, whatever the palate approves, eat and drink always in moderation, but never in excess; keeping in mind that the first process of digestion is performed in the mouth, the second in the stomach; and that, in order that the stomach may be able to do its work properly, it is requisite the first process should be well performed; this consists in masticating or chewing the solid food, so as to break down and separate the fibres and small substances of meat and vegetable, mixing them well, and blending the whole together before they are swallowed; and it is particularly urged upon all to take plenty of time to their meals and never eat in haste. If you conform to this short and simple, but comprehensive advice, and find that there are various things which others eat and drink with pleasure and without inconvenience, and which would be pleasant to yourself only that they disagree, you may at once conclude that the fault is in the stomach, that it does not possess the power which it ought to do, that it wants assistance, and the sooner that assistance is afforded the better. A very short trial of this medicine will best prove how soon it will put the stomach in a condition to perform with ease all the work which nature intended for it. By its use you will soon be able to enjoy, in moderation, whatever is agreeable to the taste, and unable to name one individual article of food which disagrees with or sits unpleasantly on the stomach. Never forget that a small meal well digested affords more nourishment to the system than a large one, even of the same food, when digested imperfectly. Let the dish be ever so delicious, ever so enticing a variety offered, the bottle ever so enchanting, never forget that temperance tends to preserve health, and that health is the soul of enjoyment. But should an impropriety be at any time, or ever so often committed, by which the stomach becomes overloaded or disordered, render it immediate aid by taking a dose of *Norton's Camomile Pills*, which will so promptly assist in carrying off the bur-

den thus imposed upon it, that all will soon be right again.

It is most certainly true that every person in his lifetime consumes a quantity of noxious matter, which if taken at one meal would be fatal: it is these small quantities of noxious matter, which are introduced into our food, either by accident or wilful adulteration, which we find so often upset the stomach, and not unfrequently lay the foundation of illness, and perhaps final ruination to health. To preserve the constitution, it should be our constant care, if possible, to counteract the effect of these small quantities of unwholesome matter; and whenever, in that way, an enemy to the constitution finds its way into the stomach, a friend should immediately be sent after it, which would prevent its mischievous effects, and expel it altogether; no better friend can be found—no, none which will perform the task with greater certainty, than **NORTON'S CAMOMILE PILLS**. And let it be observed, that the longer this medicine is taken the less it will be wanted, and it can in no case become habitual, as its entire action is to give energy and force to the stomach, which is the spring of life, the source from which the whole frame draws its succour and support. After an excess of eating or drinking, and upon every occasion of the general health being at all disturbed, these **PILLS** should be immediately taken, as they will stop and eradicate disease at its commencement. Indeed, it is most confidently asserted that, by the timely use of this medicine only, and a common degree of caution, any person may enjoy all the comforts within his reach, may pass through life without an illness, and with the certainty of attaining a healthy **OLD AGE**.

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